

BUDP NEWS

- Have some great photos of your time in the U.S.? Share them with *BUDP News*
- Have a great new job? Let us know what you're doing, how you got it, why you like it
- Interested in meeting up with old BUDP friends? Get in touch with your Sarajevo-based coordinator, Melissa Bajric, to get involved in alumni programming—conferences, community service, networking and more!

Words of advice to the BUDP Class of 2004-2005 from your coordinator:

Bring something with you that represents Bosnian and Herzegovinian culture (coffee, postcards, music, movies, traditional wardrobe)

Make sure to have Bosnian evenings—if you know how to cook that will be a great way to present Bosnia

Be open to all new experiences

Don't bring too many suitcases— one is enough!

Travel, travel, travel

If you have a problem of any kind, don't keep it to yourself. Talk to your advisor or coordinator—they are all there to help you

Study, but find time to join a club, go hiking, go to the movies...

MOST importantly, have a good time!

THE BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA UNDERGRADUATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (BUDP) IS A PROGRAM OF THE BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE ADMINISTERED BY AMERICAN COUNCILS FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION: ACTR/ACCELS

EU Integration the Topic of BUDP Alumni Conference

On March 20th and 21st 2004, twenty alumni of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Undergraduate Development Program (BUDP) met in Sarajevo for the first-ever BUDP alumni conference. Representing 30 percent of the BUDP alumni community, these pioneers discussed Bosnia's future prospects for European Union integration, as well as the role a BUDP alumni association could play in that transition. Speakers from the EU Mission in Bosnia, OSCE, the Bosnian Government and the U.S. State Department helped alumni frame and advance these important discussions. The conference was funded by the U.S. Department of State and administered by American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS.

The format of the conference consisted of presentations with questions and answers the first day, followed by a day of workshops and brainstorming sessions. As a means to foster professional development for the alumni, Coca-Cola Bosnia conducted a mock interview session. This session turned out to be highly motivating for all of the alumni. Two representatives from Coca-Cola explained how Coca-Cola in Bosnia recruits and hires people and what the interview process is like. One alumna, Selma Kupusovic, volunteered to try out the mock interview with Coca-Cola and said she learned a lot about what kind of questions she could expect in future interviews with Western companies.

Alumni attending the two-day conference came from regions as diverse as Banja Luka, Bihac, Tuzla, and Sarajevo. The 20 alumni also represented different years of the BUDP program. Evaluations of the conference show that alumni highly valued the opportunity to learn about the different



Alumni and speakers pose at the alumni conference.

processes going on in Bosnia regarding European integration, and enjoyed the open forum in which they debated their ideas and shared experiences.

By the end of the second day, the alumni set a list of six goals that they want to achieve in 2004 and their plan for starting work on these goals immediately.

The five goals alumni set forth and the alumni in charge are:

- 1 Alumni Association Registration -- by the end of July -- Damir Mezet, Ines Kuburovic, Luljeta Koshi and Edin Pasic.
- 2 Alumni website -- Damir Mezet
- 3 Database of BUDP alumni -- end of May -- Romana Mandeganja and Irena Crncevic
- 4 Seminar for BUDP Alumni in Banja Luka in Fall 2004
- 5 Training for students in Tuzla, Sarajevo, Banja Luka -- Career Day -- Fall 2004

News from our BUDP Alumni:

- ◆ Congratulations to **Selma Kupusovic** (2000-2001)! Selma received her B.A. in Economics this spring and has just started working at BH Telecom.
- ◆ Congratulations to **Ida Kuburovic** (2001-2002)! Ida received her B.A. in English Language and Literature, taught English at the Katolicki Skolski Centar Medical High School, and recently started working for the OSCE in their Department for Education.
- ◆ Congratulations to **Ines Kuburovic** (2001-2002)! Ines received her B.A. in English Language and Literature.
- ◆ Congratulations to **Maja Kapetanovic** (2002-2003)! Maja's team at the Law Moot Court, part of the Balkan Case Challenge contest this past December 2003, won the competition. As a result, she and her team have been invited to spend one month conducting research at the Institute of International Law at the Karl Franzens University in Graz, Austria. Her winning team members include Helga Spadina from Croatia, Diana Nacea from Romania, and Gjika Gjergji from Albania.

Learning to be a Good Teacher *by Azra Lulic*

My job as a tutor to middle school students is a full hit: I get the chance to improve personally, intellectually, and, as I usually walk to work which takes 30 minutes, physically. J Since I do not have a lot of chances to walk here, this is really good exercise!

But, talking about this seriously, tutoring American students can sometimes be really hard work. However, it is a great challenge that often demands a lot of patience. It is not easy to work with students on lessons that sometimes I myself do not have a clue about. For instance, trying to help them with their Spanish homework, a language that I do not speak at all, requires additional skills, creativity, and—praying. In this case, I usually try to recall my knowledge of Bosnian, English and Italian, and to apply it to what they are learning. Working with them on math can be even more difficult—I couldn't wait to finish high school just so I could get rid of math courses, and I was sure I would never have to deal with those again. This is a good example

Of the “never say never” life philosophy.

I am pleasantly surprised when I see that what I am doing with these students gives good results. Now I know the answer to the question I asked myself at the beginning of my work: how can this help me in my future profession as an English language high school teacher? I now know that I will not fail at being a good teacher of my field of study, especially since I have been managing to help students with courses I am not completely familiar with. I don't mean to be bragging at all, I am just telling the facts!

Azra Lulic (2003-2004) studied at Utica College of Syracuse University in Utica, New York, and is from Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

My American Experience *By Sandra Lukic*

It is a great challenge for any European student to come and study for some time in America. I am more than happy to be here and have the opportunity to appreciate the American educational system and way of life. So far I have been in the U.S. for almost seven months, during which I have experienced college life, made many friends and managed to take a long trip all over the country during winter break. Growing up in Bosnia, I presumed that Europeans were the friendliest and kindest people, but have to admit that I am more than surprised with American generosity, openness and hospitality.

Something very unusual happened to me just a few days ago. I had to go to the dentist since part of a filling came out and had to be replaced. I was a bit concerned about the bill since dental care is very expensive in the U.S. if you do not have dental insurance, which was the case with me. The dentist was a very nice man

and we talked a bit before he fixed my filling. His daughter is an exchange student in Europe and is very happy being there. He says that Europeans treat her very well and that she is just like me: completely excited about her new life, friends and a different culture.

After he fixed my tooth, he told me a story. His daughter and her friends were in London and wanted to go to a show, but it was very expensive and some of them could not afford it. They all decided not to go so that no one would be left out. One English gentleman heard them talking, approached them and gave them seven tickets for free. I was amazed by the story and then my dentist told me that, "This is your story too. I will not charge you. You just do something nice for some foreigner in your country." I was surprised, confused and touched. I thanked him, and left thinking how special and human this man was. After a few days I sent him

a box of Bosnian chocolates and a thank you note. I wanted him to know how much I appreciated what he did, but especially the way he did it.

My dentist is just one example of the hospitality, openness and kindness, which I have been blessed to experience in America many times. Every time, I am so amazed with the way Americans act whether they are our dentists, professors, people in the stores, cleaning staff in our dorms, or even some unknown people on the streets. That is the way they are. My dentist is a real representative of the American culture that I respect and admire so much.

Sandra Lukic (2003-2004) studied at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri, and is from Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Sandra Lukic (left) and Dalija Hasanbegovic (right) are pictured at a coffee shop in Columbia, Missouri.

The "My American Experience" Essay Contest

Each winter, American Councils holds an essay contest for its program participants studying in the U.S. This includes BUDP students, but also graduate and high school students, and faculty members from 18 countries. Four essays

were submitted by BUDP participants, with the essay by Sandra Lukic winning third place and a \$50 award. We encourage BUDP alumni to submit similar essays for publication in the future.

All materials for publication in upcoming issues of "BUDP News" should be sent to BUDP@smartnet.ba or millman@americacouncils.org.

From Your Coordinator *By Melissa Bajric*

Sarajevo, July 2002. It was not long after our BUDP group returned from the States that we were welcomed home at a party at Ambassador Bond's residence. There we met with the 2002-2003 group of BUDP students on their way to Pittsburgh and Montana. We were excited to go to their PDO, where we shared our experience in the U.S. and told them not to bring too many bags. They were ready to listen and use the advice we had for them.

At that time, I had no idea that in February I would become the BUDP program coordinator and be in

charge of alumni activities. Since then, I have involved BUDP alumni in many activities: they served as interpreters during the USS Nicholas visit to Neum; they spent time with children at the SOS Kinderdorf village in Sarajevo, telling them about American culture and history, as well as their own experiences in the U.S. The alumni have also become involved in the BUDP recruitment process. I have to mention just how helpful our alumna Luljeta Koshi was with interested students.

Whenever I find out about a job opening, scholarship, conference or anything

else that might be of interest to alumni, I forward it to our alumni list. This is why it is so important that you keep us updated with any email address changes!

This past March, we held the first ever alumni conference, which was a great success. We are in the process of planning another one for September

2004 to be held in Banja Luka. We welcome your proposals for the conference theme—your thoughts, ideas and proposals always count!

Your coordinator,
Melissa.



Melissa Bajric (2001-2002) studied at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, New Hampshire, and is from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

My American Experience *By Djana Kazic*

After living as a student in La Crosse, Wisconsin, for more than half a year, I feel truly blessed for having this opportunity. It is amazing how much one can change and grow in such a short period of time. Today, I see the world with fewer boundaries, with less judgment, and I find myself to be much more open to change from which I try to learn and benefit. I am more independent, stronger and more flexible than I used to be.

For me it is extremely important that I did not have to go through all these changes alone. I have

made some true friendships that I know I will treasure and nourish for the rest of my life. Most of my time I have spent with books, working on group projects and doing research. I have gained much knowledge in different fields and value all the practical experiences I've had as well. In my country, this kind of practical experience in school is missing, and is our biggest deficiency.

I have come to realize even more how much I love and appreciate my family, my friends back home, my country and its people. But,

when I think of not being here when this program ends and living this great life that I have, I know how hard it will be. I consider this to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I will treasure as long as I live.



Djana Kazic (2003-2004) studied at the University of Wisconsin in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, and is from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the photo below, Djana (on the right) and a friend cross-country ski in Wisconsin.

My American Experience *By Dalija Hasanbegovic*

The great Mark Twain once said that the difference between the right word and the nearly right word was the same as that between lightning and the lightning bug. His definition applies here. The difference between the right American experience of mine that would represent the extensiveness of this incredible opportunity and the nearly right one is the same as that between water and the watermelon. Hence, I will not even attempt at elaborating on a particular instance of my life in the United States ubiquitous to all other aspects of it. I will merely condense all the particles into a story of one encouraging and enlightening year.

I come from Bosnia, a wonderful country recovering from a challenging history and entering into a demanding future. To succeed, the country needs educated, capable and un-

prejudiced young people with a vision.

My major is journalism, and I have entered this program as both a student and a working professional. Journalism in my country has, for the most part, arrived to an almost valueless level that generates no respect or trust from the public. While the credibility of the profession has never been smaller, the need for well-rounded, well-trained and unbiased journalists has never been greater. Therefore, I was overwhelmed with excitement and honor after learning that I had been chosen to attend the University of Missouri School of Journalism, the number one journalism school in the United States. Looking back, my excitement and expectations were proportional to all the possibilities for self-improvement that I have found in Mizzou. The faculty and the staff here are not only interested in the

contributions the School can make to journalism education, but to the very state of journalism at large. In addition to a variety of didactical courses, the students (including my very fortunate self) are able to interact and learn from prominent guest speakers as well. I have had the chance to have my questions answered by Pulitzer Prize winners, a White House correspondent for CNN, a deputy managing editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, and one producer named to be one of the ten most powerful women in media, among others.

Throughout the course of my exchange studies here, my journalistic skills have improved tremendously, the thin line between subjectivity and objectivity in my mind became much thicker, the importance of this profession for the community is more visible, and the possibilities to

Dalija Hasanbegovic (2003-2004) studied at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri, and is from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her photo appears on the back cover of this newsletter.

make a difference are less obscure. Thanks to this program and the U.S. Department of State, I am equipped with the knowledge and determination to animate my fellow students to, instead of yearning to emigrate out of Bosnia, stay and give their contribution to the future of our country. I have learned that getting involved and always setting higher standards for ourselves and for the next generation is not an option—it is a requirement.

My American Experience *By Vanja Milasinovic*

I can say that my American experience was something really amazing. I never thought that I would get the opportunity to talk to so many different people and try so many different things. Making friends worldwide, why not? Nowadays everything is *global*, so I don't see why I would be an exception.

The first thing I noticed after arriving here is that Americans are really polite and well-behaved. Compared with the environment

I come from, this is real heaven. My second impression was how BIG everything seemed to be. Cars, streets, apartments—even some food items—were much bigger than what I am used to (and the flavor is a bit questionable). Being an equal part of such a vast international community at my university and **representing my culture, country, and nation** is such a great feeling. I can say that Americans do

not only represent themselves, rather, they represent the whole world. There is enormous diversity of nations, cultures and

racism in the U.S. that I have never seen before. This is due to the fact that the U.S. is the *place where everyone is welcomed*.



Vanja Milasinovic studied at the University of Wisconsin in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, and is from Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Vanja was a scarecrow for Halloween as part of his community service project with local children.

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Submission to *BUDP News* should:

- **State your name, year of BUDP participation, name of U.S. University, name of home city**
- **Be 300 words or less**
- **Include a photo of yourself, if available**
- **Include news about your career, time in the U.S., or topical essays of interest to the BUDP community**
- **Be sent to Melissa Bajric at budp@smartnet.ba or Alissa Millman at millman@americancouncils.org**

BUDP Alumni in Sarajevo spent the day with children at the SOS Kinderdorf Social Club in January 2004. The alumni taught them about the United States and played educational games with them, giving out prizes for a poster contest and sampling American foods.



Dailija Hasanbegovic is pictured with Missouri Professor Kent Collins, Mrs. Collins, and fellow international students from Denmark and Norway at the Lewis and Clark Heritage Festival in Columbia, Missouri.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

August 2004: Re-entry seminar for BUDP Class of 2003-2004 students

September 2004: BUDP alumni conference to be held in Banja Luka

October—November 2004: Assist with recruiting new BUDP students in your home city!

October 30, 2004: Deadline for submissions to the next issue of *BUDP News*

Fall 2004: Career Day Training for Students: Sarajevo, Tuzla and Banja Luka

To participate in any of the above initiatives, contact Melissa Bajric at budp@smartnet.ba or 33-296-548